

REMARKS

The applicant thanks the examiner for acknowledging applicant's claim for foreign priority and reception of the certified copy of the foreign priority document that was submitted on 27 July 2004. The applicant also thanks the examiner for having returned an initialed copy of the PTO 1449 that was submitted on 27 July 2004.

Claims 1 – 8 are currently pending. Claims 1 – 5 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. New claims 9 – 25 are presented for examination. The applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and allowance of this application in view of the above amendments and the following remarks.

Claims 6 – 8 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Pat. No. 6,529,810 to Foo *et al.* (hereafter: "Foo"). The applicant respectfully requests that this rejection be withdrawn for the following reasons.

Amended claim 6 recites the novel embodiment disclosed, for example, on pgs. 9 – 13 of an occupant-protecting airbag device including: a plurality of sensors 1, 2 sensing a physical quantity acting on the vehicle and outputting analog signals indicative of the physical quantity; a comparator 6 placed to directly receive at least one of the analog signals and make a comparison between the analog signal and a reference signal to produce a digital signal corresponding to the analog signal; a digital-signal input port 72 configured to receive the digital signal produced by the comparator; an A/D converter 71 receiving at least one of the analog signals to perform an A/D conversion on the analog signal to produce another digital signal; a determination unit 73 configured to use both the another digital signal produced by the A/D converter and the digital signal received by the digital-signal input port to determine whether or not the airbag should be

deployed; and an ignition circuit 4 configured to ignite the squib to deploy the airbag when the determination unit determines that the airbag should be deployed.

Foo discloses an occupant restraining system 10 that includes crash sensors 32 for outputting signals to a controller 50 through filters. The filtered output signal is provided to an analog-to-digital converter 112, the output of which is filtered again and sent to a determination function. The determination function 118 of the controller 50 determines two crash metric values Vel_Rel_1X (crash velocity) and Displ_Rel_1X (crash displacement), which are compared against crash displacement varying thresholds in a comparison function 124 to determine whether to deploy stages of the restraining devices.

However, Foo fails to disclose a comparator placed to directly receive at least one of the analog signals from the sensors, and that the comparator is configured to make a comparison between the analog signal and a reference signal received by the comparator so that a digital signal corresponding to the at least one of the analog signals is produced. Rather, Foo discloses comparator means 124 placed to directly receive digital signals from the digital to analog converter 112. In contrast, as illustrated in Fig. 2, amended claim 6 recites a comparator 6 directly connected to the acceleration sensor 2 to directly receive a signal therefrom, thereby eliminating the need for various circuit components to processing the sensed signal such as the filters 52, 116 of Foo.

Therefore, because Foo fails to disclose a comparator placed to directly receive at least one of the analog signals from the sensors, and configured to make a comparison between the analog signal and a reference signal to produce a digital signal corresponding to the analog signals, it is respectfully requested that the rejection of amended claim 6 be withdrawn.

Claims 7 – 8 depend from claim 6. Therefore, the rejection of these claims should be withdrawn for at least the above-mentioned reasons with respect to claim 6.

New claims 9 – 25 are presented for examination. These claims recite features that further distinguish the present invention from the cited art. Support for new claims 9 – 25 can be found on, for example, pgs. 9 – 13.

New claims 9 – 19 depend from claim 6. Therefore, new claims 9 – 19 should be in condition for allowance for at least the above-mentioned reasons with respect to claim 6.

New claims 20 – 25 also recite the novel embodiment of an occupant-protecting airbag device including a comparator placed to directly receive an analog signal from the sensor and configured to make a comparison between the analog signal and a reference signal so that a digital signal corresponding to the analog signal is produced. As discussed above, Foo fails to disclose such a comparator. Therefore, new claims 20 – 25 should also be in condition for allowance.

In view of the foregoing, applicant submits that this application is in condition for allowance. A timely notice to that effect is respectfully requested. If questions relating to patentability remain, the examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone.

If there are any problems with the payment of fees, please charge any underpayments and credit any overpayments to Deposit Account No. 50-1147.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kerry S. Culpepper", written over a horizontal line.

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